

MINUTES OF THE ALBERT LEA HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

March 11, 2025

5:30 pm – City Center

Call to order at 5:35pm by Megan Boeck.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Bryan, Jennifer Levisen, Nic Lang, Brad Kirchner, Tarrah Hall-Sather, and Larry Baker.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Stephanie Kibler and Tom Staker.

STAFF PRESENT: Megan Boeck, City Planner. Cathy Malakowsky, Engagement and Enrichment Director.

INTERESTED PARTIES: Rachel Christensen, City Councilor and owner of 232 Washington Ave S, Sara Lang, owner of 232 Washington Ave S, and Shari Sprague, Executive Director of Albert Lea Chamber of Commerce.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Hall-Sather and second by Bryan to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Lang and second by Hall-Sather to approve the March 12, 2024 meeting minutes as written. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) Certificate of Appropriateness – 147 Broadway Ave N

Kirchner opened the public hearing at 5:36pm.

Boeck stated that the Marion Ross Theatre, on behalf of the City of Albert Lea, has applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install automatic doors the same size and scale as what is currently there as well as mounting controllers.

Malakowsky stated that there is a fourth window which is façade only and covered by an inside wall and that it will not be replaced.

Baker questioned why the windows were not being purchased locally. Malakowsky responded that the windows were all very customized.

Kirchner closed the public hearing at 5:41.

Motion by Lang and second by Bryan to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for 147 Broadway Avenue North as applied for.

Motion carried on a 5-0 voice vote.

2) Certificate of Appropriateness – 232 Washington Ave S

Kirchner opened the public hearing at 5:43pm.

Nic Lang abstained from the public hearing at 5:43pm.

Boeck stated that the property owners have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness for four different exterior repairs:

- 1) Window replacement on the east storefront (Washington Ave)
- 2) Window replacement and foundation repairs of the south side (Main Street)
- 3) Window and garage door replacement on west side (Alley)
- 4) Updated signage – includes removing the existing signage except for the shadow box sign on the southeast corner
- 5) New Signage – construct a 15x8 foot sign to cover a previously bricked over window opening

Boeck also stated that item number 2 of the request for window replacement was withdrawn by the applicant and that no action should be taken on that item.

Nic Lang on behalf of the Hatch provided the commission with updated renderings and stated that the existing guidelines do not consider changing streetscapes and that existing and future windows on the south side are at risk for damage by snow plows, snow removal, and other debris. Lang also stated that he already purchased windows which make the project more affordable and asked the commission to consider a common-sense approach.

Christensen stated that she is excited to bring the building back to life and that the Hatch will be a great addition to our community.

Levisen asked what the Hatch is.

Lang explained it is a membership that provides space for word working, art, textiles, and 3D printing and fills a void in the microbusiness space.

Kirchner closed the public hearing at 6:10pm.

Motion by Levisen and second by Hall-Sather to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for 232 Washington Avenue South as applied for items 1, 3, 4, and 5 with no action on item 2.

Motion carried on a 4-0 voice vote with Lang abstaining.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Certificates of Appropriateness – Staff Approvals

Boeck provided the commission a list of staff approvals that have been granted for COA's to date.

Lang asked if all staff approvals could be sent as they are received or approved so that commissioners don't have to wait for a meeting to get the information.

COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Boeck introduced Jennifer Levison to the HPC Commission. Boeck stated that Levison has served on the commission in the past and that she looks forward to having a full commission.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Boeck informed the commission that she sent a technical review request to the State Historic Preservation Office on behalf of 338 Broadway Ave S. Boeck also stated that the City received a structural evaluation that outlined significant structural deficiencies to all four sides of the building and that repairs are estimated at \$726,700 of which neither the property owner or the City of Albert Lea is able to pay for. Lastly, Boeck stated that the technical review will determine if the structure still has sufficient integrity to contribute to the National List of Historic Places.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Hall-Sather and second by Lang to adjourn the meeting at 6:31pm.
Motion carried.

Megan Boeck, City Planner

Brad Kirchner, Vice-Chair